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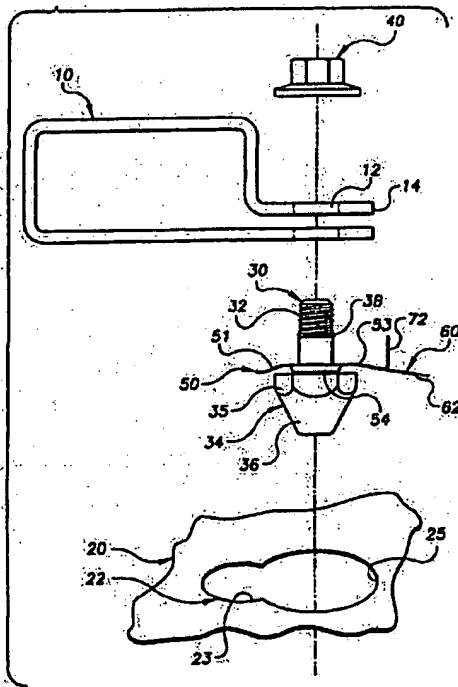
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(54) Side airbag retention system and fastener

(57) A side airbag retention system for installation in a keyhole opening (22) including a bolt with a generally conical head portion (36) and a shaft (30) disposed through an aperture (12) of the air bag retainer. A bolt retainer is disposed about the bolt shaft (30) between the bolt head (34) and an air bag retainer (10). The bolt retainer preferably includes a spring washer (50) having a pronged engagement member (62) extending generally radially therefrom between anti-rotation tabs (70, 72) extending from a side thereof opposite the bolt head. A compression limiting member (54) is disposed about and protrudes from the washer opening toward the bolt head.

FIG. 1

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Description

[0001] This invention relates generally to fastener retainers, and more particularly though not solely to side air bag retention systems and fasteners therefor.

[0002] Bolt retainers for retaining bolts, for example in keyhole openings, are known generally.

[0003] An object of the present invention is to provide novel a retention system and fastener therefor which will go at least some way towards improving upon or overcoming problems in the art.

[0004] Accordingly, in a first aspect, the invention consists in a side airbag retention system comprising an air bag retainer, a bolt having a generally conical head portion and a shaft disposed through an aperture of the air bag retainer, and a bolt retainer disposed about the bolt shaft between the bolt head and the air bag retainer.

[0005] In a further aspect, the invention consists in a retention system comprising a bolt having a head and a shaft fastened to an article, a spring washer disposed about the bolt shaft between the bolt head and the article, an annular member disposed about an opening of the spring washer and protruding from a side thereof facing the bolt head, an engagement member extending from the spring washer generally radially therefrom, and a prong protruding from a side of the engagement member facing the bolt, the prong extending generally away from the bolt shaft.

[0006] In a further aspect, the invention consists in a keyhole retention assembly comprising a bolt having a shaft and a generally conical head, a spring washer disposed about the bolt shaft, an engagement member extending from the spring washer generally radially therefrom, and a prong protruding from a side of the engagement member facing the bolt head, the prong extending away from the bolt shaft.

[0007] In a still further aspect, the invention consists in an article retention assembly for installation in a keyhole opening comprising a bolt with a generally conical head portion and a shaft disposed through an aperture of the article and coupled thereto, a spring washer disposed about the bolt shaft between the head and the air bag retainer, a pronged engagement member extending generally radially from the spring washer between anti-rotation tabs extending from a side thereof opposite the head, and a compression limiting member disposed about and protruding from the spring washer opening toward the bolt head.

[0008] A particular embodiment of the invention will now be described with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:-

FIG. 1 is an exemplary side airbag retention system for installation in a keyhole opening; and

FIG. 2 is a partial view of an assembled and installed side airbag retention system.

[0009] FIG 1 illustrates a bolt retention assembly for

fastening an article to a panel 20 having a keyhole 22 with relatively small and large opening portions 23 and 25, respectively.

[0010] In the exemplary application, the article is a side airbag retainer 10 having an aperture 12 through one or more portions thereof, and the panel 20 is an interior roof portion near the A and B pillars of an automobile.

[0011] In FIG. 1, the bolt retention assembly comprises a bolt having a shaft 30 preferably having a threaded portion 32 and a head 34. The bolt is disposable through the aperture 12 of the airbag retainer 10 and is generally coupled thereto, for example by a nut 40 or by threaded engagement with a threaded portion of the aperture 12. The exemplary bolt head includes a wrenching surface 35, but other embodiments may include some other torque transmitting configuration.

[0012] The exemplary bolt head also includes a generally conical head portion 36 having a relatively narrow end portion protruding axially therefrom. The conical head portion facilitates insertion thereof into the keyhole or other opening, and is particularly desirable in applications where installation is performed blindly. In the exemplary side airbag application, for example, the airbag retainer is installed on the interior roof of the passenger compartment from outside the vehicle, where the keyhole is not readily visible to the installer.

[0013] The bolt retention assembly also comprises a bolt retainer for retaining the assembly in the keyhole or opening. The exemplary bolt retainer generally comprises a spring washer 50 disposed about the bolt shaft, and an engagement member 60 extending from the spring washer generally radially, and preferably beyond or outwardly of the bolt head.

[0014] The spring washer 50 generally comprises one or more resilient portions biased toward the bolt head for applying an axial retention force thereto. In FIG. 1, the exemplary spring washer has resilient portions 51 and 53 curved toward the bolt head on opposite sides of the washer opening. In other embodiments, the spring washer may have a radial or other wave form.

[0015] In FIG. 1, the engagement member preferably includes a prong 62 protruding from a side thereof facing the bolt head. The prong 62 extends generally away from the bolt shaft. In the exemplary embodiment of FIG. 2, the prong 62 is formed, for example in a stamping operation, at or on an end portion of the engagement member 60 between opposite lateral side portions 64 and 65 thereof.

[0016] In FIG. 1, the prong 62 is preferably disposed on a portion of the engagement member extending outwardly beyond the head portion of the bolt. The prong 62 is also preferably spaced from the opening of the spring washer so that the prong is engageable with an edge of the larger keyhole opening portion 25 after the bolt is laterally positioned therefrom to the smaller keyhole opening portion 23, as illustrated best in FIG. 2.

[0017] The engagement member 60 is preferably re-

resilient and is biased toward the bolt head 34. During installation of the bolt retention assembly with the airbag retainer or other article, the engagement member provides an audible sound indicating that the prong is engaged with the opening and that installation is complete. [0018] In FIG. 2, the prong 62 preferably protrudes sufficiently far from the side of the engagement member 60 facing the bolt head to permit capturing the panel 20 between the prong 62 and the lateral side portions 64 and 65 of the engagement member 60.

[0019] In FIG. 1, the spring washer 50 preferably includes an annular member or portion 54, which may be a continuous member or comprised of discrete portions, disposed about the washer opening and protruding from the side thereof facing the bolt head. Upon assembly, the annular member 54 seats against the bolt head and limits compression of the spring washer between the bolt head and panel during tightening of the nut or other bolt engagement means.

[0020] The bolt retainer preferably includes an anti-rotation member for preventing rotation thereof during assembly with the article or exemplary airbag retainer 10. In FIG. 1, the aperture 12 of the airbag retainer 10 is near an end portion 14 thereof, and the anti-rotation member comprises two tabs 71 and 72 (only tab 72 is visible in FIG. 1) extending from the side of the retainer opposite the bolt head.

[0021] In FIG. 2, the tabs 71 and 72 are disposed on opposite sides of the engagement member 60 extending from the end of the spring washer. Upon installation of the bolt retention assembly with the article or airbag retainer 10, the two tabs 71 and 72 are adjacent and engageable with the end portion 14 thereof to prevent rotation of the washer.

[0022] In FIG. 1, a generally annular protuberance 38 is disposed about the bolt shaft to capture the spring washer 50 between the bolt head 34 and the protuberance 38.

[0023] The exemplary bolt retainer is preferably a unitary member, for example, spring steel formed in a stamping or other forming operation, but may be formed as an assembly in other embodiments.

[0024] Alternative embodiments of the invention may include other known bolt retainers.

Claims

1. A side airbag retention system comprising:

- an air bag retainer (10) having an aperture (12);
- a bolt having a shaft (30) and a generally conical head portion (36), the bolt shaft (30) disposed through the aperture (12) of the air bag retainer (10); and
- a bolt retainer disposed about the bolt shaft (30) between the bolt head (34) and the air bag re-

tainer (10).

2. The system according to claim 1, wherein the bolt retainer comprises a spring washer portion (50) having an opening and an engagement member (60) extending from an end thereof, the engagement member (60) having a prong (62) protruding from a side thereof facing the bolt head (34), the prong (62) extending away from the opening of the spring washer portion (50).
3. The system according to claim 2, wherein the spring washer portion (50) has an annular member (54) disposed about the opening thereof, the annular member (54) protruding from a side of the spring washer portion (50) facing the bolt head (34), the bolt coupled to the airbag retainer (10) by a nut (40).
4. The system according to claim 2 or claim 3, wherein the spring washer portion (50) has resilient portions (51, 53) biased toward the bolt head, the prong (62) disposed on a portion of the engagement member (60) extending generally radially beyond the bolt head (34).
5. The system according to any one of claims 2 to 4, wherein the aperture (12) of the airbag retainer (10) is near an end portion thereof and an anti-rotation member (71, 72) is provided comprising two tabs extending from a side of the spring washer portion (50) facing the airbag retainer (10), the two tabs adapted to be positioned adjacent the end portion of the airbag retainer, the engagement member (60) extending from the end of the spring washer portion (50) between the two tabs.
6. A keyhole retention assembly comprising:
 - a bolt having a shaft (30) and a generally conical head (34);
 - a spring washer (50) disposed about the bolt shaft (30);
 - an engagement member (60) extending from the spring washer (50) generally radially therefrom;
 - a prong (62) protruding from a side of the engagement member (60) facing the bolt head (34), the prong (62) extending away from the bolt shaft (30).
7. The assembly according to claim 6, further comprising an annular member (54) disposed about an opening of the spring washer (50), the annular member (54) protruding from a side of the spring washer facing the bolt head (34).
8. The assembly according to claim 6 or claim 7, wherein the spring washer (50) has a resilient por-

tion (51,53) biased toward the bolt head (34).

9. The assembly according to any one of claims 6 to 8, wherein a protuberance (38) is disposed about the bolt shaft (30), the spring washer (50) captured between the bolt head (34) and the protuberance (38). 5
10. The assembly according to any one of claims 6 to 9, wherein two tabs (70,77) extend from a side of the spring washer (50) opposite the bolt head (34), the engagement member (60) extending between the two tabs (70,72) and an annular member (54) is disposed about an opening of the spring washer (50), the annular member protruding from a side of the spring washer facing the bolt head (34). 10 15

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35

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FIG. 1

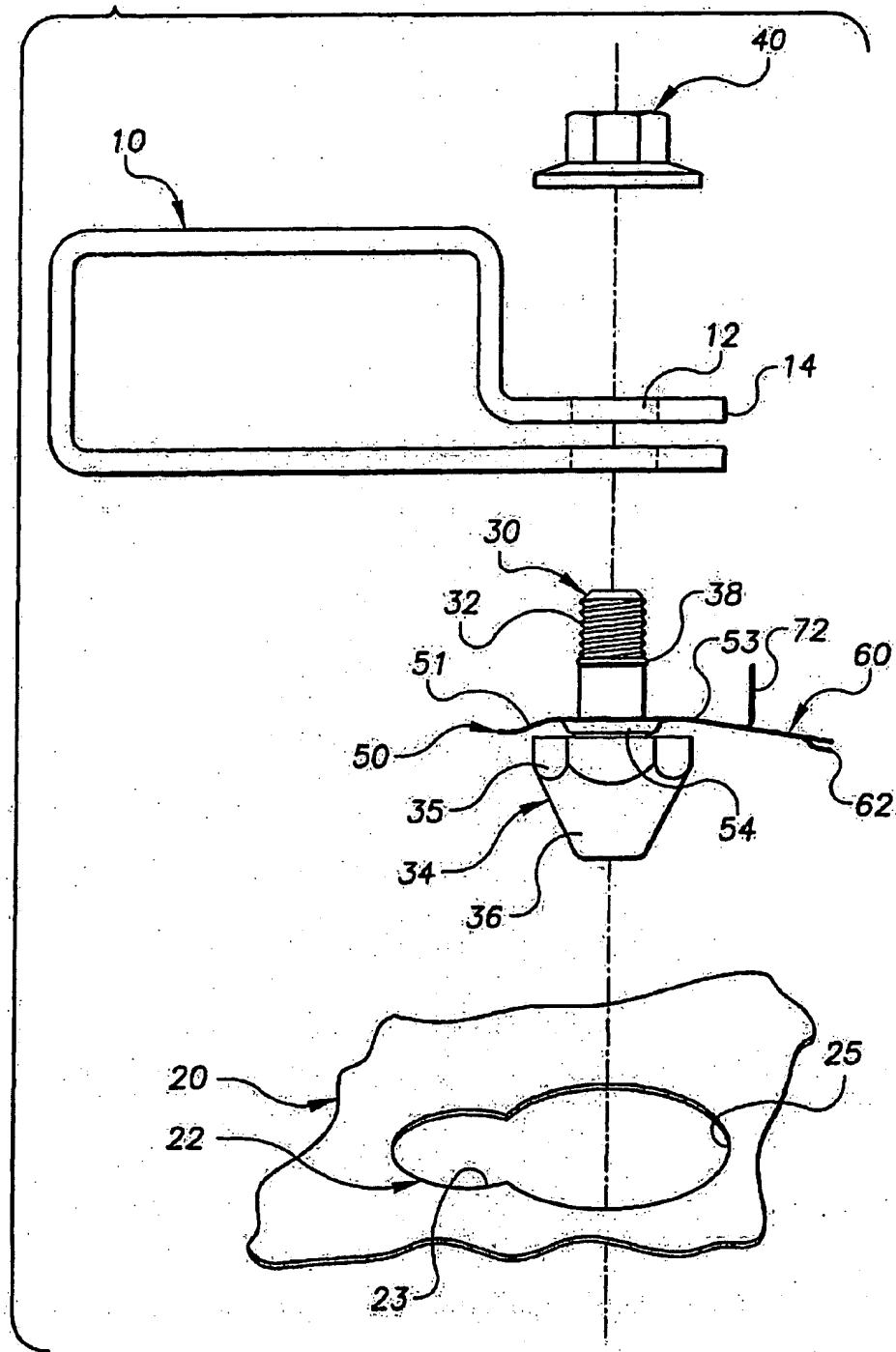
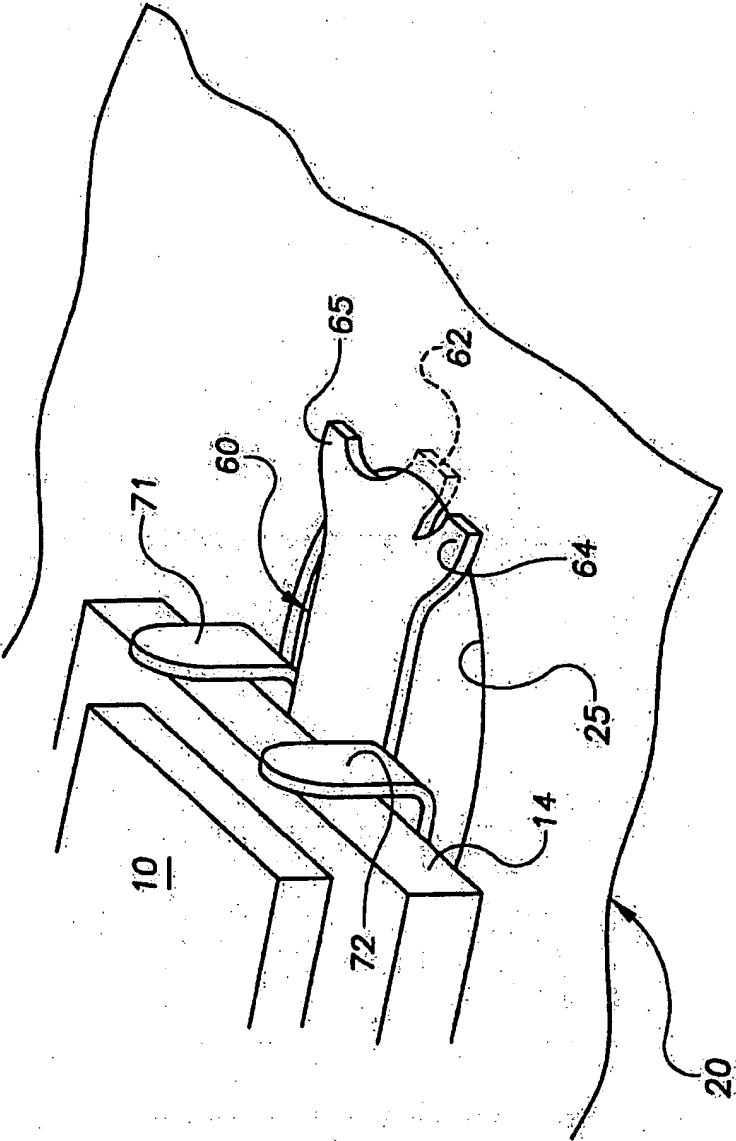


FIG. 2



★AUTO- Q17 2002-208190/27 ★EP 1179457-A1
Motor vehicle steering wheel component has flexible rod to engage with
catches on second component such as airbag module (Frn)

AUTOLIV-ISODELTA 2000.08.02 2000FR-010202

Q61 (2002.02.13) B60R 21/20, F16B 21/18

2001.07.18 2001EP-401923 R(AL AT BE CH CY DE DK ES FI FR GB GR
IE IT LI LT LU LV MC MK NL PT RO SE SI TR)

Novelty: The steering wheel component (2) is fitted with a flexible steel rod (19) in a basic U-shape with a movable centre section (24) and angled tips (30A, 30B) on its side branches (25A, 25b) interacting with stops (31Ab 31B). The rod is held in place by retaining hooks (21A - 21H), and its side branches are designed to engage with two or more catches on the underside of a second component such as an airbag module. The second component can be released by pressing a tool (28) against the centre section of the rod, causing its side branches to deform and disengage from the catches.

Use: Fitting second component such as airbag or impact cushion to vehicle steering wheel.

Advantage: The flexible rod makes for simple and convenient assembly and dismantling of a second component on the steering wheel.

Description of Drawing(s): The drawing shows a perspective view of the steering wheel component.

Steering wheel component 2

Flexible rod 19

Centre section 24

Retaining hooks 21A - 21H

Side branches 25A - 25B

Tool 28

Angled tips 30A, 30B